UNITED
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Secretariat

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INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the Staff at Headquarters
Members of permanent missions to the United Nations

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMME - ACADEMIC YEAR 1992/93

1. Language training courses in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are organized in order to promote linguistic balance within the Secretariat and to improve the language capabilities of its staff as mandated by General Assembly resolutions 2480 B (XXIII) of 21 December 1968 and 43/224 D of 21 December 1988. The purpose of these courses is to provide staff members with the opportunity to achieve proficiency in other official languages, bearing in mind their needs and their office hours. The United Nations language proficiency examination is the official test of a staff member's knowledge of a language and may be taken both by participants who have completed the last level of a language course and by staff members who have achieved proficiency from outside sources.

I. ELIGIBILITY

2. (a) All staff members who have appointments for at least six months beyond the deadline of the registration period for the term in question may register for language courses. Priority for admission is given to staff members; members of permanent missions to the United Nations will be admitted as space permits. Applications from other categories of non-staff members (consultants, staff of non-governmental organizations, press correspondents accredited to the United Nations and staff of other organizations of the common system) will be considered in the light of available resources (see para. 6 below for information on fees);

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(b) Consular staff, spouses and children are not admitted to United Nations language courses. However, the Hospitality Committee for United Nations delegations offers courses for spouses of staff members, for spouses of members of missions and for consular staff. Further information about these courses may be obtained from Mr. Frank Werth, Hospitality Committee English School, General Assembly Building, room 101, tel. (212) 755-1685.

II. REGISTRATION

Procedure

3. (a) New participants in the programme may register for a language course by filling out a registration form, which may be obtained from the Language Training Programme, room S-606, during the established registration period between 1 and 3 p.m. and returning it to the same room before the published deadline. Those who have some prior knowledge of the language they wish to study must make an appointment for a placement test when they register;

(b) Once registered in a language course, participants will be given an opportunity in class before the end-of-term examination to renew their registration for regular courses in subsequent terms. Participants who fail to reregister at that time will be dropped from the programme unless they have submitted a written explanation of their special circumstances to the appropriate language coordinator;

(c) All those who wish to participate in conversation classes or other special courses, such as the advanced reading workshops, the guided self-study workshops or the English pronunciation workshop, must fill out the appropriate registration form, which may be obtained in room S-606 during the registration period;

(d) Returning participants who have been absent from a course of study for two terms or more will be required to take a placement test in order to re-enrol in the programme;

(e) Registration for the September term of academic year 1992/93 is scheduled to take place from 1 to 12 June, and from 31 August to 4 September 1992 from 1 to 3 p.m. in room S-606.

Registration for the January and April terms will take place from 2 to 13 November 1992 and from 1 to 12 March 1993.

Language of study

4. Prospective participants should exercise particular care in choosing the language in which they wish to take either a regular or an accelerated course, for they may register for only one such course each term and may not interrupt a course of study in one language in order to begin studying another without the authorization of the Training Service.

Notification of enrolment

5. Staff members and other participants whose registration is current or who have registered within the established registration period should check the class lists, which will be posted on the sixth floor of the Secretariat building and on the second floor of UNDC-2 building during the week before the beginning of each term.

Tuition fees

6. (a) Members of the United Nations Secretariat and staff of other organizations of the common system are admitted to regular and accelerated language courses free of charge. Tuition fees of $250 per term for each regular or accelerated course are payable by non-staff members as referred to in paragraph 2 (a) above. In accordance with section XVII of General Assembly resolution 36/235 of 18 December 1981, accredited (diplomatic) staff of permanent missions at Headquarters may enrol free of charge in regular and accelerated language courses during the established registration periods. All other staff of permanent missions (administrative, technical and service) will be charged the standard fee of $250. No tuition fees will be refunded after the second week of classes;

(b) Tuition fees of $100 per term for each special course, such as conversation, the English Pronunciation Workshop, etc., are payable by non-staff members as referred to in paragraph 2 (a) above;

(c) Staff of the United Nations Secretariat and staff of other organizations of the common system who repeat a regular or accelerated course at any level will be charged a repeater fee of $100; however, the repeater fee will not be chargeable if they need to repeat a course as a result of absences of three weeks or more attributable either to certified sick leave or to a mission assignment of which they were unaware at the time they enrolled in the course. Participants who have been assigned to mission service must provide written notification from their executive/administrative officer or, in the case of mission personnel, their supervisor, giving particulars of the dates and duration of the assignment.

III. COURSE CALENDAR

7. The 1992/93 course calendar is as follows:

(a) September 1992 term

Language classes:	14 September-4 December 1992
End-of-term examinations:	7-11 December 1992

(b) January 1993 term

Language classes:	4 January-26 March 1993
End-of-term examinations:	29 March-2 April 1993

(c) April 1993 term

Language classes: 19 April-9 July 1993
End-of-term examinations: 12-16 July 1993

IV. DESCRIPTION OF LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMME

8. Four types of courses are offered each term: regular, accelerated, conversation and specialized workshops. In addition, the Training Service also designs and conducts special language training courses to meet specific language needs at the request of departments.

Regular courses

9. (a) Depending on the level, regular courses meet for one-hour periods, three or four times a week, with the lower levels receiving extra laboratory work each week, starting in the second week of the term;

(b) Classes are offered at the following times:

Before work: 8.30 a.m.

Lunch hour: 12 p.m.
1 p.m.
2 p.m.

After work: 5.45 p.m. (6.15 p.m. during the General Assembly session)

It should be noted that not all levels of a given language are offered at each of these times. Draft schedules, posted in room S-606, should be consulted at the time of registration. Every effort will be made to place registrants according to the time preferences they indicate; however, because the number of places in lunch-hour courses is limited, there is no guarantee that registrants will be given the time they have chosen.

Accelerated courses

10. Accelerated courses are offered as an intensive alternative to the regular programme. Classes meet five days a week from 9.15 to 10.15 a.m. Written authorization is required for staff members wishing to take such courses. This authorization must be renewed each time the staff member reregisters for an accelerated course.

Conversation courses

11. Conversation courses are provided for staff members who have passed the language proficiency examination or who have a sufficiently advanced knowledge of the language. Those enrolled in the upper four levels of a language

programme are also eligible to participate. The purpose of these courses is to develop oral expression and to supplement the instruction provided in the other courses. Conversation classes meet for either one or two hours before or after work.

V. SPECIALIZED WORKSHOPS

Language workshops

12. Specialized language workshops in different language skill areas are offered; advanced reading workshops and guided self-study workshops are available. These workshops allow participants to focus on and improve their abilities in specific skill areas. These workshops generally meet for one hour a week. At the time of registration, participants may check which workshops are available in the language they wish to study.

Pronunciation skills workshop in English

13. The pronunciation skills workshop in English is offered to staff members who wish to focus on improving their pronunciation. There are two sessions a week, of one hour each, including practice in the language laboratory under the guidance of the workshop teacher.

Advanced writing: drafting letters and memoranda

14. Advanced writing workshops in English and French, the working languages of the Secretariat at Headquarters, are available to those staff members who have passed the language proficiency examination or are native speakers of the language and whose function requires them to draft letters and memoranda. The goal of these courses is to develop the participants' abilities to write clearly, concisely and correctly, using the style appropriate to United Nations letters and memoranda. The workshops generally meet from 3 to 5 p.m. one day a week. Staff members wishing to take such courses must have written authorization.

Principles of report writing workshop in English

15. Beginning in the September 1992 term, the principle of report writing workshop in English will be offered. The workshop will cover the format and style recommended for writing reports for the Organization. Emphasis will be placed on writing action-oriented reports that present essential information as briefly and clearly as possible. As with the advanced writing workshops, this workshop is open to those staff members who have passed the language proficiency examination or are native speakers of the language and whose function requires them to draft reports.

VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Language laboratory

16. The Training Service operates a language laboratory (UNDC-2, room 203), consisting of a teaching laboratory and a laboratory for individual study. The hours during which the language laboratory is open are posted on the bulletin board on the second floor of the UNDC-2 building at the beginning of each term.

Lunch-hour attendance of language courses

17. Staff members attending classes during their lunch hour are allowed 20 minutes for a quick meal before resuming their work.

Absenteeism

18. Participants who fail to attend class during the first week of the term will automatically be dropped from the class list, and their places may be allotted to persons on the waiting list. Absences from class should be explained in writing to the appropriate language coordinator.

Course materials

19. Participants will be informed on the first day of class of the materials that will be used during the course. It should be noted that course materials produced by the Training Service are intended for use exclusively by participants in the language courses offered by that Service.

Examinations

20. (a) Examination schedules are posted during the last month of classes. Examinations are an integral part of the teaching programme, and it is mandatory to take them. Participants who do not sit for the end-of-term examination will be dropped from the programme unless they have submitted adequate written explanation to the appropriate coordinator in advance of their absence;

(b) Participants who are prevented by compelling circumstances from taking the examination as scheduled and who wish to request a make-up examination should write a memorandum to the coordinator of the language they are studying. Those who are authorized will be notified of the exact date of the make-up examination;

(c) Examinations are given after the last week of classes for regular and accelerated courses to determine whether a participant will pass to a higher level or repeat the course. The examinations consist of written and oral components, both of which must be passed to enable a participant to go on to the next level. Participants who fail a course may arrange to have a general discussion of the results of their examination by making an appointment with the appropriate language coordinator one week after the beginning of a term;

(d) The language proficiency examination is given twice in every calendar year. This examination is the official test of a staff member's knowledge of a language. The examination is open to all students who have completed the last level of a United Nations language course and to staff members who have achieved proficiency from outside sources. Application to take this examination must be made separately. Further details are given in information circular ST/IC/1991/69. There are no make-up examinations for the language proficiency examination.

Cancellation of registration

21. Students who believe that they will be unable to complete the course in which they are enrolled and wish to withdraw must do so by completing the change-of-registration form in room S-606 within the first two weeks of the term. If these students wish to reregister for the same course in a subsequent term, they must come in person to room S-606 during the announced registration period to complete the necessary registration forms. Those who cancel their registration after this two-week period will be considered repeaters if they reregister for the same course. Therefore, staff members and other non-paying participants will be charged a $100 fee to repeat a course.

VII. INQUIRIES

22. Telephone numbers to call for information:

General information and message machine: 963-7021

Language laboratory: 963-2482

Language proficiency examinations: 963-9503 or 963-7021

Pedagogical inquiries and appointments with coordinators:

Arabic: 963-9506
Chinese: 963-2481
English: 963-7027
French: 963-7019 and 963-5153
Russian: 963-7063
Spanish: 963-7026

Information desk: 963-7056
Teachers' room: 963-5155

Staff members who wish to consult a coordinator should telephone in advance for an appointment.

23. The information desk in the Secretariat building room S-606 is open from 1 to 3 p.m. on weekdays for inquiries.